



A pit west of Parowan is being researched for historical value, following the rescue of a dog that fell in the pit last week. BLM officials said there could be a Spanish explorer connection. NUR KAUSAR / DAILY NEWS

Dog's fall leads BLM to research value of pit

By Nur Kausar

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CEDAR CITY — Before the Bureau of Land Management fills a deep pit on BLM land near Parowan Gap where a dog named Buster fell last week, the local bureau's archaeologist has requested a study.

"I proposed the project to a team immediately, but one of our archaeologists said the pit may have some cultural resource value because it may have been dug by Spanish explorers," said BLM Minerals Specialist Ed Ginouves. "It may be a more recent issue, not historical, but he will follow up on it."

Bill Lund with the Utah Geological Survey contacted Ginouves about the pit after Buster fell in and Iron County Search and Rescue was called to pull the dog out.

"It's right next to a dirt road and concealed by some bushes, just waiting to swallow up an ATV," Lund wrote to Ginouves about the incident.

Initially, public safety officials thought the pit was an old mineshaft, but Ginouves, who had no prior knowledge of the pit, said surface geologic formations or mineral

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Public safety officials get ready to save a dog that fell in a 30-foot-deep pit Jan. 26. Following the incident, BLM archaeologists are studying the pit for possible historical value and are considering its proximity to old trails. NUR KAUSAR / DAILY NEWS

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resurfacing did not indicate mining occurred in the area.

"It's an anomaly, and that's what gives it some credibility to the Spanish explorer connection," Ginouves said, adding the hole is in proximity to the Old Spanish Trail.

The minerals specialist said artifacts have also been found in the region west of Parowan.

Buster's owner Bob Giles hikes through the red hills around the Gap often and

took Lund and another UGS associate with him that day to look for unique areas in the earth, specifically anything fissure-caused.

Giles said he has seen artifacts, pictographs and even similar pits as the one under investigation, but the area does not have signs or fenced areas to explain historic significance.

Ginouves said if archaeological reports show cultural value, the BLM would create a boundary or fence to give people "a heads-up" in case they are hiking or riding an all-terrain vehicle, which is

just the right size to fall into the pit.

Otherwise, the most cost-effective plan is to fill the hole with on-site material, he said.

"Signing could be beneficial (in the interim), but is a mixed blessing because they tend to draw more attention, and some who didn't know the hole was there would now stop and get out to look at it," Ginouves said about putting up a boundary. "And for anyone who has been to the site, once you start to descend, you're on a one-way trip down to the bottom."